

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) An elastomeric bladder disposed in a vehicle seat for occupant weight estimation, the bladder comprising:

upper and lower sheets of elastomeric material peripherally welded to form a closed volume containing a bladder fluid; and

a plurality of elastomeric tethers coupling said upper and lower sheets of elastomeric material within said peripheral weld ~~that restrict separation of said sheets but that collapse when occupant loading reduces the separation between said sheets to minimize shunting of occupant weight through said bladder~~, where said tethers are in a state of partial collapse when no occupant weight is applied to said seat, and where tethers in any given portion of said bladder: (1) further collapse when occupant weight is applied to said seat and causes the bladder fluid to be displaced from said given portion of said bladder, and (2) extend to restrict separation of said upper and lower sheets when occupant weight is applied to said seat and causes the bladder fluid to collect in said given portion of said bladder.

2. (currently amended) The elastomeric bladder of ~~Figure 1~~ claim 1, wherein at least one of said elastomeric tethers is in the form of a strip of elastomeric material, with a first end of said strip affixed to said upper sheet and a second end of said strip affixed to said lower sheet.

3. (currently amended) The elastomeric bladder of ~~Figure 1~~ claim 1, wherein said tethers are arranged in a uniform geometric pattern.

4. (currently amended) The elastomeric bladder of ~~Figure 1~~ claim 1, wherein said tethers are arranged in a non-uniform pattern.

5. (currently amended) The elastomeric bladder of ~~Figure 1~~ claim 1, wherein two or more of said tethers are defined by a sheet of elastomeric tether material that is selectively spot welded to said upper and lower sheets.